

What is Agrology in BC?

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It was while looking for potential careers related to soil science that I learned about agrology. Although at first I assumed that agrology was only concerned with traditional agriculture, it became clear that it was a broad field with many areas of practice. Agrology began in BC with a specific focus on agriculture, but has now diversified and modernized, counting 38 areas of practice related to aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems (BCIA 2019).

Areas of practice in agrology include agroforestry, crop development, and livestock development, which are included in the Agricultural sector; however, sectors such as Environmental, Life Sciences, and Food also contain a wide range of areas of practice. To name a few, this includes ecological land classification and mapping, soil and land conservation, greenhouse gas verification and management, health and nutrition products, food safety, and even aquaculture (BCIA 2019).

The expanded domain of agrology today would be unrecognizable to the five men who formed the Canadian Society of Technical Agriculturalists in 1920, or even to those practising agrology in 1947 when the Agrologists Act was passed in BC (BCIA 2008). Now governed under the Agrologists Act of 2003, the value statements of the BCIA include inclusivity, scientific rigour, integrity, collaboration, and universal consideration (BCIA 2008).

To become a Professional Agrologist in BC, a candidate must have a bachelor's degree related to science; must have passed courses in natural sciences, agriculture, and/or resource economics; and then needs to undertake an articling period. As part of the articling process, the aspiring agrologist has to find mentorship and employment in an agrology-related field, as well as participate in professional development activities, for a minimum of two years. The professional designation earned through this process indicates that the bearer is a knowledgeable professional with current experience and high ethical standards (BCIA 2019).

The diversity of education and experience that is represented by the 1300 agrologists working in BC is what makes agrology a dynamic field. As the health of the environment becomes a prominent public issue, the work of agrologists can directly contribute to finding solutions to today's issues.

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